

A LETTER

TO THE

COMMITTEE CHOSEN BY THE AMERICAN
TRACT SOCIETY,

TO INQUIRE INTO

The Proceedings of its Executive Committee,

IN RELATION TO

SLAVERY.

BY

WILLIAM JAY.

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LETTER, &c.

GENTLEMEN :

A responsibility, no less undesired than unexpected, has been thrown upon you. The discharge of this responsibility will either smooth or ruffle your dying pillow ; it will accompany you through the dark valley, and bear witness for or against you before the judgment seat. The weight of this responsibility consists in the influence your action will exert in weakening or strengthening the fidelity and courage of the American Church. This influence will spring solely from the weight of your personal characters, and the high position you occupy in the confidence of the religious community. Your functions as a committee are not those of a jury, for there is no *issue of fact* to be tried. The acts of the Executive Committee which have given offence, and which have led to your appointment, far from being denied, are admitted and justified. Nor are your functions those of a court, invested with authority to decide and settle controverted rights. Whatever may be your report, it cannot control, however it may influence, the future action of the Society or the opinion of the public. As a Committee of Inquiry, your province is to collect the arguments urged for and against the action of the Executive Committee, and to express your opinion of their relative weight. Hence each party has an undoubted right to present to you their own view of the case, and thus to aid you in acquiring a full and accurate knowledge of the merits of the controversy. As already observed, you cannot authoritatively decide that controversy ; and from your opinion of its merits, whatever it may be, an appeal will certainly be made to the public. Hence it becomes important that the public, as well as yourselves, should

be furnished with the objections urged against the policy pursued by the Executive Committee. The Committee have already taken care that the public should be abundantly informed of the grounds on which that policy is defended.

The profound silence observed by the Society, in regard to American Slavery, and its practice of expunging from its reprints every reflection, however slight, on the wickedness of the system, at length called forth a remonstrance from a distant ecclesiastical association. The reply was the first intimation given to the public, of the reasons for the policy objected to, and of the intention of the Executive Committee to make that policy permanent. The reasons were *three*: 1st. The constitution requires that the publications of the Society be "calculated to meet the approbation of all evangelical Christians;" and hence, as there are Methodists, &c., who claim property in man, no censure of such property would be approved by them. 2d. *Expediency*. "It would seem a sacrifice of a greater to a lesser good to engage in the discussion of a topic already exhausted, and with the likelihood of satisfying none, and with the certainty of alienating multitudes of our best friends." 3d. It is the office of the Society to "move forward on the simple errand that brought the Saviour into the world—proclaiming Christ and him crucified." This proclamation, to the publication of which the Society is to confine its labors, is, if interpreted by the conduct of the Society, the most unintelligible ever announced to mankind. The proclamation of Christ and him crucified, takes no notice of the cruelty and injustice perpetrated by the disciples of the Crucified, against millions of their fellow-men, in robbing them of every civil and religious right—in the annihilation of their conjugal and parental relations—in their enforced concubinage—in sealing to their eyes the volume of inspiration—and in their conversion and that of their posterity into articles of merchandise and beasts of burden. Hence, the Society will not go beyond the proclamation. But the proclamation, although silent as to these abominations, is copious in its denunciation of other offences, including some *not known* at the time it was issued. Hence, the

Society feels itself at full liberty, while moving forward on the simple errand of reiterating the proclamation, to announce the divine wrath against all who sell or drink intoxicating liquors—who read novels, play cards, attend horse-races, join in the dance, go to the theatre, and either smoke or chew tobacco!!

It is not surprising that such a vindication did not prove satisfactory. The agitation continued and increased, and new intensity was given to it, by the conduct of the Rev. Nehemiah Adams, D. D., one of the Publishing Committee, and, as such, possessing an absolute veto on every tract offered for publication. This Rev. gentleman had published a labored vindication of American Slavery, excusing and extenuating each of its abominations, and in its sneering, jeering tone, highly insulting to such of his fellow-Christians as had been zealous in exposing the iniquities of the slave system. At length the officers of the Society became alarmed; and as the opponents of its policy had intimated an intention of procuring the appointment of a committee to consider and report on that policy, the Executive Committee, prudently making a virtue of necessity, the very day before the annual meeting in May last, resolved, "That should it be the pleasure of the Society to appoint a Special Committee to review the proceedings of their Executive Committee, this Committee will welcome and facilitate all *inquiries* of such Special Committee, to any extent that shall be desired."

Notwithstanding this official action, violent opposition was made by the more ultra members to any investigation. A heated debate ensued in a crowded assembly, and an effort to obtain an expression of "undiminished confidence" in the management of the Society, was abandoned as hopeless. Ultimately the following resolution was adopted:

"Regarding the action and proceedings of the Executive Committee as frankly and ingenuously inviting the fullest investigation into all the affairs entrusted to their care: *Therefore, Resolved*, That, at the suggestion of the Executive Committee themselves, a Special Committee of fifteen be appointed to inquire into, and review the proceedings of the Executive Committee, and report to the next annual meeting, or to a duly convened special meeting to be called by said Committee at their discretion."

The resolution is adroitly drawn. Its professed acceptance of the invitation of the Committee, the very general terms in which it is expressed, and its careful avoidance of all allusion to the only subject on account of which the Committee was desired, all indicate the extreme reluctance with which your appointment was yielded to the anti-slavery sentiment of the community.

The only proceedings you were, in fact, appointed to "inquire into and review," were such as, while they committed the Society to an open avowed neutrality in regard to "the sum of all villanies," virtually secured to the oppressor the countenance and sympathy of a great and powerful religious institution. In reviewing these proceedings, you will of course be compelled to review both the conduct and the apologies of the officers by whom they have been carried into effect. One of the complaints against the Executive Committee is, their practice of expunging from their reprints every expression which impugns the moral or religious character of American slavery. Instead of denying the charge, they aver in the last report that they do expunge that "which Christians at the South would regard as untruthful, harsh, or denunciatory," p. 22. As a practical illustration of the rule adopted by the Committee, take the following from the well-known and excellent work entitled "Mammon," by Harris. The author, showing the immoral and unchristian influence of covetousness, observes, "Its history is the history of slavery and oppression in all ages." This slight and accidental connection of slavery with oppression and with covetousness, the Committee believe would be regarded by Christians at the South "as untruthful, harsh, or denunciatory," and therefore the sentence is made to read in the Society's edition, "Its history is the history of oppression in all ages," p. 78. Here, then, we have one of the most powerful Christian associations in our land refusing to acknowledge that the conversion of millions of human beings into articles of merchandise for the pecuniary benefit of the rich, and their deprivation of all civil and religious rights for the sole purpose

of rendering them more profitable to their owners, partakes of the character of either covetousness or oppression!

The frank avowal of the Committee, and their action in accordance with it, precludes all inquiry into the *fact* whether the American Tract Society does or does not in its publications shield American slavery from animadversion. As all the facts complained of are boldly avowed, and zealously justified, you have no other field of inquiry respecting the conduct of the Committee, than the truth and sufficiency of the excuses they have put forth, and the probable influence of their established policy, on the cause of Christianity, and consequently on the morality and happiness of the nation. Here, gentlemen, is found the stupendous responsibility involved in your commission. If the policy of the Society be unrighteous, and vindicated by false sophistical arguments and assertions; and if it tends to bring dishonor on Christ—to give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme—to strengthen and extend cruelty and oppression—to jeopard the salvation of souls, and if, nevertheless, you commend and uphold this policy, who shall estimate the awful result of your error!

Your attention will be first directed to the *official* reasons assigned in support of the established policy. Mr. Secretary Cook's proclamation argument, of course, will not detain you. From that you will pass to the *legal* argument, on which the Executive Committee apparently place great confidence. One of the wits of the *Edinburg Review* remarked, that he never read a book before reviewing it, lest it might bias his judgment. The gentlemen of the Committee, in appealing to the *charter* of the Society, seem to have acted on the reviewer's rule. In their circular of fifth of February, 1856, they tell us, "This Society is a *body corporate, chartered* for the accomplishment of a *specific object by prescribed means*." 31st Rep., p. 193. This reference to the charter is evidently for the purpose of intimating that as the *law* specified both the object to be pursued and the means to be employed, any reference to slavery in the publications of the Society would be *illegal*. This idea is more fully expressed and urged by the President of the Society in his

printed official letter. He says to the Executive Committee and other officers, By the *words* of your *charter*, the tracts published were to be such as are 'calculated to receive the approbation of all evangelical Christians,'—the objection is raised that you do not publish as you ought on the subject of slavery. The question then arises whether the Society consistently, *within the limits of their charter*, by which they must be regulated, could publish such tracts as the complainants propose? Now there are Churches of every denomination called evangelical, scattered over all our Southern States—the great mass of individual Christians, and of Christian Churches, we have reason to believe, would say such tracts did not receive the approbation of all evangelical Christians among them. What, then, should the American Tract Society, with their *charter* for their guide, do? Shall they, without other evidence, denounce all these churches, and all these individuals, as not evangelical? *How would such a sentence be regarded in courts of justice?*" The argument leading to this last and strange interrogatory is briefly this: The *charter*, the law of the State of New York, requires the tracts to be such as are calculated to receive the approbation of all evangelical Christians. Now, there are such Christians at the South, yet the Society, by publishing tracts against slavery, would, in fact, deny the existence of such Christians, for, by law, no tract may issue offensive to any of them. Now, in such cases, what would the courts do? Perhaps declare the charter forfeited—perhaps issue an injunction against the publication of anti-slavery tracts. The President proceeds: "The sentence of excommunication which some, in their heat, have pronounced against Southern ministers and Southern Churches, is *ex cathedra*; and officers acting under your *charter*, would not, in my opinion, be justified in LAW or conscience in adopting it."

Had the President taken the trouble to *read* the charter, which plays such an important part in his defence of the Society, he would undoubtedly have received a *bias*, that would have diminished his confidence in the argument he has founded on it. Now, it so happens that this famous charter, this shield

of human bondage, is a very brief act of the New York Legislature, passed 26th May, 1841, incorporating, in the usual terms, "All such persons as now are or may hereafter become members of the American Tract Society, formed in the city of New York, for the purpose of printing and circulating religious publications." This is all the charter says about "a specific object by prescribed means." Not a word about evangelical Christians, or indeed Christians of any sort or kind. "Non constat," as the lawyers say, that the incorporators are not Papists or Socinians. Not a word is said of the nature of the publications to be issued, except that they are to be "religious." The *charter* contains not the most distant allusion to either slavery or tobacco-chewing, yet Tract Society logic deduces from it a legal prohibition to censure the one, and a legal warrant to denounce the divine displeasure against the other! Having seen *why*, what the President calls the excommunication of Southern Christians, that is, a condemnation of human bondage, cannot be justified "*by law*," let us next see why it cannot be justified by "*conscience*."

We are solemnly, repeatedly, and officially warned, that by the first article of the constitution, the object of the Society is declared to be, "To diffuse the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of sinners, and to promote the interests of vital godliness and sound morality, by the circulation of religious tracts calculated to receive the approbation of ALL EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS." Hence, says the President, "If these Southern Churches remain evangelical Churches, and Southern Christians are still evangelical Christians, it is their right and your duty to abstain from publishing *even truths*, the publication of which they would not approve." But suppose a portion do approve of these truths? It makes no matter, so long as *any* evangelicals object. No truth may be published, not accepted and approved by ALL.

If this be, indeed, the just and literal meaning of the constitution, then is the American Tract Society burthened with a constitution unparalleled for its stupidity and absurdity; a constitution giving to each individual among the evangelical

Christians in this and other countries, a veto on every tract and book offered for publication to the Society. If such be the constitution, its framers were fit subjects for a lunatic asylum. But they were wise as well as good men, and the article in question bears testimony to their character in both respects. The interpretation now attempted to be fixed on the constitutional restriction of the publications to be issued, has been practically repudiated and rejected by the Society from its first organization to the present day.

Who are *evangelical* Christians within the meaning of the constitution? Unquestionably such as profess to belong to a Church or denomination holding certain doctrines respecting the Trinity, the atonement, the influence of the Holy Spirit, and justification by faith, &c., which are usually called "*evangelical*." When, therefore, it was agreed at the formation of the Society, that its tracts should be calculated to receive the approbation of all *evangelical* Christians, nothing more was or could be intended than that these tracts should contain nothing to which an evangelical Christian *as such* could object, that is, the *doctrines* held by his Church should not be impugned. Whether a tract was or was not calculated to receive the approbation of *all* evangelical Christians, was to be determined, not by the opinion of an individual Methodist or Baptist, but by an appeal to the creeds and confessions of faith of the different evangelical Churches. Thus the Society itself, in its petition to the Legislature of New York (1841) for a charter, avers that it was formed for "promoting the interests of vital godliness and sound morality, by the circulation of religious tracts calculated to receive the approval of evangelical Christians of *different denominations*." Here we see, that denominational standards, and not the opinions of one or more individuals, were to be the test of approval. To secure the impartial application of this test, the different evangelical *denominations* were to be represented in the Committee of Publication by a member from each; and the Committee were individually vested with a veto on every proposed publication. The whole arrangement exhibits not merely a most Christian and catholic

spirit, but also a wise adaptation of means to secure justice to the several denominations supporting the Society.

But the Society is not to be confined to the diffusion of a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ in accordance with evangelical doctrines. It has another and most important object, the promotion of "sound morality." Now, sound morality is not tested by evangelical doctrines, but by the precepts of Scripture and the dictates of reason and of conscience. Scarcely a single mooted question of morals is decided in any Church creed; nor is there such a question on which evangelical and heterodox Christians will not be found united on either side. And will it be maintained that the Society may express no disapprobation of privateering, or of the traffic in ardent spirits, or of the practice of some lawyers in endeavoring to screen from punishment men whom they know to be guilty of fraud or crime, merely because its animadversions would fall on and offend a few evangelicals among the various denominations? If such an opinion has been entertained, it has been treated by the Society with the contempt it merits. Innumerable are the amusements, occupations, and practices denounced by the Society, which are vindicated and countenanced by multitudes of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, &c., &c. Probably the great mass of evangelical Christians in this and other countries indulge in the use of intoxicating liquors, and maintain that their moderate use is lawful and Christian. Not a few sermons have been preached against the doctrine of total abstinence; and an evangelical bishop now living has declared in print that the triumph of temperance societies would be the triumph of infidelity. We all know the arguments drawn from the Old Testament, the miracle at Cana, and the apostolic injunction to Timothy, in favor of the use of wine and "strong drink." Yet the Executive Committee, perfectly oblivious of the first article of the constitution, and utterly regardless of the disapprobation of whole multitudes of evangelical distillers, retailers, and drinkers, have again and again launched its denunciations against the use of all intoxicating liquors. Nay, they have with reckless boldness assailed the very "soldiers of the

church," *evangelical* soldiers too, for defending the practice of using such liquors. Millions of evangelical Christians, and certainly a great majority of the male members of the American Tract Society, daily indulge in the use of tobacco, and have no belief that such indulgence is unchristian. Yet the Executive Committee, careless of their approbation, have poured forth a tremendous counterblast to tobacco! So also, although evangelicals make war a trade, and vast numbers of their ministers are army chaplains, and in the name of Christ exhort the soldiers to be valiant in slaying the enemies of their country, still the Executive Committee have not been restrained by "the fundamental principle" of the Society from denouncing war as unchristian. Yet it is now discovered that nothing may be said against slavery, which is not calculated to receive the approbation of all evangelical slave-holders, traders, and breeders!

It is for you, gentlemen, to announce how far, in your opinion, the law of the State of New York, or the first article of the constitution, compels the Executive Committee, in their publications, to consult the feelings and interests of those who hold their fellow-men as chattels, while the same sources of authority give the Committee free license to assail the feelings, the interests, the occupations, the amusements, the habits of thousands, and hundreds of thousands of other evangelical Christians.

Your commission empowers you to inquire into and review the proceedings of the Executive Committee. Good men are often bad logicians, and we may differ from their conclusions without questioning their motives; but we have a right to expect from good men, if not sound arguments, at least *truthful* statements. If any members of the Executive Committee, in vindicating their conduct, have made assertions at variance with facts, it will be your part, gentlemen, in justice both to the Society and the public, to point out the discrepancy, and to make such apologies for their aberrations from truth, as Christian candor and charity will allow.

In March, 1856, the chairman of the Publishing Com-

mittee, and the senior Secretary, addressed a letter, in defence of the policy of the Society, to one of the Vice-Presidents, who had asked on what grounds it was justified. This letter was widely circulated, and was afterwards embodied in the annual report, p. 201. One most pregnant question put by the Vice-President was, "*Has not the Society published, on intemperance and other evils, what many evangelical Christians do not approve?*" To this interrogatory the two reverend gentlemen returned the very laconic reply, "IT HAS NOT, SO FAR AS WE KNOW." The infantile ignorance of these gentlemen, who, for the last thirty years, have been breathing the atmosphere of the Tract Depository, is as wonderful as it is painful. This declaration of ignorance was made, not only after millions of pages had been scattered broadcast through the land, representing the moderate drinkers of intoxicating liquors on the verge of perdition, but while the sheets of a new tract, containing the following appeal, were scarcely dry from the press: "What Christian can indulge himself in using tobacco—a habit which *benumbs the moral sense*, as well as pollutes the body, that temple which is designed for the indwelling of the Spirit of truth? How long are the sacred altars of God to be polluted with the unhallowed offering, and the garments of the priesthood to remain uncleansed from its defilements?"

It may be proper to ascertain, gentlemen, by your inquiries, whether these two clergymen really believed that such enormities as reading novels, drinking wine, selling spirituous and malt liquors, dancing, attending theatres, smoking segars and chewing tobacco, were confined to heretics and outside barbarians, and that none of the fierce denunciations issued by the Society against these iniquities fell on *evangelical Christians*. If, however, such Christians may be told, both under the *charter* and the *constitution*, that in using tobacco they are benumbing their moral sense, would it not be well to explain why others may not likewise be told that they are benumbing their moral sense, in dealing in negro flesh, in shrouding in darkness the intellects of millions, in annihilating marriage, and in reducing to the condition of beasts of burden

immortal, accountable beings, for whose redemption the Son of God shed his own blood on the cross?

It is certainly within the limits of your commission to inquire how far the conduct and avowed sentiments of any member of the Executive Committee are in accordance with the decorum and Christian character becoming an officer of a great religious institution. If an officer has rendered himself intensely odious to a large portion of the Society, and his avowed sentiments are regarded as adverse to justice, humanity, and the prosperity of his country, it is within your province to recommend his resignation or removal.

You will of course understand these remarks as referring to the Rev. Dr. N. Adams, one of the Publishing Committee, and as such exercising an absolute and irresponsible veto on every sentence of every tract offered for publication. This gentleman has earned an unenviable notoriety by his unhappy eulogium on American slavery. His unblessed book, entitled "A South Side View of Slavery," is too well known to render many extracts necessary to illustrate its character. In contemplating a great and prosperous slave-holding Republic as the result of a dissolution of the Union, he anticipates with apparent complacency the renewal of the African slave trade. He tells us, "Such have been the marvellous acts of divine grace to the Africans in bringing them through the cupidity and sinfulness of men to this country, and saving a multitude of them, that it requires neither strong faith nor fancy to suppose that this work might still go on in the form of interchange between Africa and the Southern States. The South has learned to be, and is fitted to be, the protector and friend of the African," p. 118. The interchange alluded to is the transportation of *free* negroes by the Colonization Society, and the importation of slaves. The marvellous acts of divine grace exemplified in the slave trade are, the conversion and salvation of multitudes of its victims; and of course these same marvellous acts will attend the revival of the trade. The marvel is the greater from its being independent of the ordinary means of grace—no Bibles, no tracts

pour religious truths into the darkened minds of the poor benighted wretches. They are kept in ignorance, in order that they may more easily be kept in bondage. Another marvel: "Of all the situations in which human beings can be placed favorable to the salvation of the soul, under faithful efforts on the part of teachers, it is difficult to conceive of one better suited to this end, and in fact more successful, than the relation of these slaves to their Christian masters. It seemed as though human influence went further towards effecting the reception of the Gospel by the slaves than in any other cases," p. 60. Still the wonder grows: "In all that constitutes Christian excellence and that knowledge of God which comes directly from Him, they have no superiors," p. 57. At last the marvel reaches its climax: "Probably in many places at the South a larger proportion of the slaves than of the whites have given evidence of being the children of God," p. 53. Certainly the African slave trade is a most wonderful and mysterious agent of divine grace, and a slave plantation is none other than one of the gates of heaven!

Before the present reign of terror in the Slave States, which is now crushing in the dust freedom of speech, of the press, of suffrage, and of the pulpit, revelations were sometimes made of the moral state of our great prison-house, not wholly in accordance with the brilliant visions of the Boston Seer. Said the Rev. Dr. Nelson, of Tennessee, and a resident of Missouri, "the concentrated recollection of *thirty* years furnishes me three instances *only* which I could say, I have reason from the known walk of that slave, to believe him or her a sincere Christian." Said the Rev. R. J. Breckenridge, formerly of Baltimore, now of Kentucky, "What is slavery as it exists among us? We reply, it is that condition enforced by one-half the States of this confederacy, in which one portion of the community called masters is allowed such power over another, called slaves, as,

1. To deprive them of the entire earnings of their own labor, except only so much as is necessary to continue labor

itself, by continuing healthy existence, *thus committing clear robbery.*

2. To reduce them to the necessity of universal concubinage, by denying to them the civil rights of marriage, thus breaking up the dearest relations and *encouraging universal prostitution.*

3. To deprive them of the means and opportunities of moral and intellectual culture, in many States making it a high penal offence to teach them to read ; *thus perpetuating whatever fo evil there is that proceeds from ignorance.*

4. To set up between parents and their children an authority higher than the impulse of nature and the laws of God, and which at pleasure separates the mother at a returnless distance from her child, thus outraging all decency and justice, and degrading and oppressing thousands of thousands of beings created like themselves in the image of God. **THIS IS SLAVERY, AS IT IS DAILY EXHIBITED IN EVERY SLAVE STATE."**

In a sermon preached before an association of planters, in Georgia, by Rev. C. C. Jones, and published at Savannah, 1831, we have the following confessions. "The description which the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, gives of the heathen world, will apply with very little abatement to our negroes. They lie, blaspheme, are slothful, envious, malicious, implacable, unmerciful ; generally speaking, they appear to be without hope and without God in the world—**A NATION OF HEATHEN IN OUR VERY MIDST.**" In 1833, the synod of South Carolina and Georgia, (the very States in which Dr. Adams observed the marvellous spiritual blessings of the slave trade,) thus describe the religious condition of the slaves ; and be it remembered that the address from which we quote was published in Charleston, S. C. "Who would credit it, that in these years of revival and benevolent effort, in this Christian Republic, there are over **TWO MILLIONS** of human beings in the condition of *heathen*, and in some respects in a worse condition ? From long continued and close observation we believe that their moral and religious condition is such

that they may justly be considered the HEATHEN of this Christian country."

It will be observed that the authorities quoted, are all *Southern* ministers, and probably as well acquainted with the religious influence of slavery and the African slave trade as our Boston divine.

Protestants are apt to regard religious liberty as favorable to religious attainments; but the exalted position which the slaves have acquired in the religion of Christ, as described by the superintendent of the Tract press, has been reached under a religious despotism more absolute and relentless than that wielded by the Pope of Rome. The Right Rev. Leonidas Polk, of Louisiana, is a great slave-breeder. An English clergyman, the Rev. Henry Caswell, in a late book of travels in this country, gives us some anecdotes of this apostolic patriarch, apparently collected from his own lips, in a conversation with him. Four hundred human beings acknowledged him as their lord and master, and Mr. Caswell tells us he "endeavors to bring them up in a religious manner. He TOLERATES no religion on his estate but that of the Church. He baptizes all the children and teaches them their catechism." Of course every slave on the plantation is converted to Episcopacy, not by the logic of the catechism, but that of the overseer's whip. The Bishop's neighbor may be a Papist, and if so, his slaves are all believers in the immaculate conception. When the Bishop sells any of his black sheep, they enter a different fold, receive new spiritual food, and profess the creed of the "highest bidder."

The purifying and enlightening influence of slavery on those whom it invests with despotic authority, is a favorite topic with slaveholders; but it was hardly to be expected that a Boston clergyman, peculiarly honored by the Tract Society, would have ventured the following assertion: "Spiritual rappings, biology, second adventism, mormonism, and the whole spawn of errors which infest us, do not find subjects at the South. There is far more faith in the South, taken as a whole, than with us. There is *more faith and less infidelity* at the South, than at the North," p. 46.

B. F. STRINGFELLOW is a name familiar to all acquainted with the atrocities of Border Ruffians in Kansas. On the 20th of July, 1854, two months after Douglass by his repeal of the Missouri Compromise had thrown the territories open to slavery, the "Platte County Defensive Association" was organized, under the special auspices of the gentleman just named. He soon presented the association with an address entitled "Negro Slavery no Evil." It is very evident from the address that the author is decidedly *evangelical*, and that he differs but little in his views from his brother of the Tract Society. He glories in the fact, that while in New England there are two hundred and two Unitarian, and two hundred and eighty-five Universalist churches, there are in all Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, but eight of these heretical synagogues, viz: one Unitarian, and seven Universalist. Hence he concludes, "the opinions usually deemed by the Christian world heterodox, or infidel, find no place among slaveholders. They run not after strange gods, invent no new religions, but are content with old-fashioned, *humble* Christianity." The following may be taken as a specimen of the humble Christianity of slaveholders. Says Mr. Stringfellow, "the negro thief, the abolitionist, who induces a slave to run away, is a criminal of a far more dangerous character than the house-breaker or the highway robber; his crime of a far higher grade than that of an incendiary; it ranks at least with that of the midnight assassin," p. 5.

Very frankly does our evangelical leader of the Border Ruffians avow the pledge of the association, to aid "in expelling those who are exported to Kansas by the abolition aid societies." With regard to the righteousness of human bondage, brothers Adams and Stringfellow are of one mind. The latter avers, that "by the first law given to man by his Maker, the law proclaimed from Sinai, slavery was established. Moses, the divine lawgiver, was a slaveholder; slavery was recognized and regulated by our Saviour. A fugitive slave, instead of being aided in his escape, was returned to his master, by Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles," p. 10.

Mr. Stringfellow being "an evangelical Christian," the fundamental constitutional principle of the Society, as now explained by its officers, forbids the publication of any tract not calculated to receive *his* approbation. Of course, not a line may be printed in disparagement of his theory of the divine origin of slavery, nor of his assertion that Moses was a slaveholder. How it is that this same fundamental principle allows the Society to rebuke the gentleman's profanity by publishing the "Swearer's Prayer," his love of strong drink by tracts on total abstinence, and his tobacco-chewing habit by their strong protests against the iniquity of its indulgence, is a question involved in an obscurity which the Executive Committee and the Secretaries, with the aid of the President, have thus far failed to dissipate.

It is now time to ask your attention, gentlemen, to the disastrous influence exercised on the public morals and on the religious power of the Church of Christ, by that system of ethics which has been appropriately termed "Cotton Divinity"—a system which virtually blesses, in the name of the Lord, the most atrocious cruelty, injustice, and wickedness. Well has it been said by the Rev. Albert Barnes, "The outward progress of liberty among the nations will compel the Churches, if they would save the world from infidelity, to detach themselves from slavery;" and he might have added, if they would save themselves from contempt and dissolution. However depraved may be human nature, it retains the power of distinguishing between good and evil—a power essential to human responsibility. The injustice, cruelty, and abominations inseparable from American slavery, are repugnant to the moral sense of mankind. The repugnance may indeed be practically overcome by self-interest; but where this interest is not active, nothing but a *perverted conscience* can cause a belief in the righteousness of slavery. It is impossible to convince the community at large that slavery is in accordance with justice, and mercy, and love, or that it is not identified with the grossest *s* fishness and inhumanity. But cotton divinity proclaims, that whether *w* think it right or wrong, just or unjust, slavery

was sanctioned by God among the Hebrews, and, therefore, He now sanctions it among Americans. But God has not, it is admitted, pointed out, at least in this country, who may be enslaved. In the absence of divine selection, the privilege is of course entrusted to those who have the power of exercising it. Hence it follows, that God has given to such of His children as possess the requisite strength and means, license to subdue and seize their feeble and helpless brethren, and convert them into beasts of burden; and, the more readily to keep them in subjection and make them profitable, to steep their minds in darkness, and render them mere human machines. Such is the view presented by this school of divinity of the justice and benevolence of the Deity, and of the consistency of the permission given to the strong to rob and oppress the weak, with the attributes of Jehovah, and the precepts of the Lord Jesus Christ! To the question whether such a view of Christianity, presented by its authorized teachers, is calculated to make Christians or infidels, your own conscience will return an immediate response. Many, to forward their own selfish views, may deem it *expedient* apparently to countenance such preaching, but few indeed will find it elevating their reverence either for the clergy or for Christianity.

Men are not influenced by a religion they neither respect nor believe. Hence cotton divinity has a direct palpable tendency to bring the gospel and its ministers into contempt, and to destroy the moral power of the Church. The result must necessarily be an increase of wickedness. The Church is intended to be the salt of the earth, and when the salt has lost its savor, putrefaction must follow. Pro-slavery influence and interests are ever found at variance with the spirit of the gospel of Christ. The Mexican war was waged for the extension of slavery. It was a most unjust war, and its partisans, to obviate the moral objections urged against supporting it, raised the God-defying cry, "Our country, right or wrong." Then came the fugitive act, one of the most accursed laws that disgraces the statute-book of any Christian nation. This law required every citizen, when commanded by a miscreant

slave-catcher, to aid him in his diabolical work. Much was said about refusing obedience to this vile enactment, and immediately certain reverend gentlemen were unwearied in reiterating the text, "the powers that be are ordained of God." Thus the official man-hunter was elevated into a special agent of the Deity; and the conscientious Christian, who refused to be a partaker of other men's sins, and declined joining in the chase, was warned that "whoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." But some still demurred, and insisted there was a higher law than even the fugitive act. Instantly a flood of obloquy and insult was poured upon the advocates of a higher law, from Daniel Webster down to the Rev. censor of the Tract Society's press. The last gentleman did not scruple to give utterance to the following sentiments: "Unless we choose to live in a state of perpetual war, we must prevent and punish all attempts to decoy slaves from their masters; there is a law of the land, a constitution, to which we must submit or employ suitable means to change. While it remains, ALL OUR APPEALS TO A 'HIGHER LAW' ARE FANATICISM," p. 128. In Jerusalem there was once a law of the land, a constitution, in virtue of which certain magistrates commanded two men, whose name we come down to us, not to teach in the name of Jesus; whereupon the fanatics had the assurance to reply, "whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Regardless of the powers, although ordained of God, unmindful of the threat denounced against such as resist the power, they appeal to the "higher laws," and how was the appeal answered? Presently the place in which they and their friends were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spoke the word of God, in defiance of the law and the constitution, with great boldness.

Dr. Adams' respect for law seems to depend on its bearing on human bondage and human liberty. The fugitive law is sacred. How with the laws of the free States, which forbid slavery, and consequently strike off the fetters from every

slave brought upon their soil? The Rev. jurist, makes short work with these laws. "We must put a stop," says he, "to the *unlawful* seizure of colored servants passing with their masters through a free State; we must in some way prevent the annoyance to which southern travellers are exposed, of having their colored servants enticed away, or *brought before the courts to be emancipated!*" p. 156. The "*seizure*" (!) complained of is the operation of the habeas corpus, and we thus learn from our divine, that the application of this writ, in behalf of southern "servants," is "*unlawful*." This Rev. gentleman is for throwing open all the free States to the entrance of slaves as such. "Let our people be appealed to against this *injustice and unkindness*," (the emancipation of slaves in our courts.) "Legislation cannot well remedy the evil, especially if its only remedy be the poor donation of leave to stay a few weeks, and no more, with a slave at the North, as some of the free States have enacted. This concession makes visitors from the South feel that they are under obligations to us for that which ought not to be placed on the ground of *permission*," p. 150. And so the censor of the Tract press claims for the slaveholder the *right* to bring and keep his slaves upon free soil, and probably to work and flog them at pleasure while there; and thus would slavery be quietly re-established in every free State. And how does this jeering man of God treat there pugnance felt at the North to this introduction of slaves as a matter of right? "*Are we afraid that the sight of the happy relation subsisting between masters and their slaves will make our people in love with the institution?*" p. 151.

It is difficult to imagine a law better calculated to scoundrelize all concerned in its execution, and to familiarize the community with cruelty and injustice, than the fugitive act. Well indeed may the men who voted for this accursed law dread the woe denounced against such as decree unrighteous decrees, to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor. To the disgrace of a noble profession, lawyers are not wanting who, deaf to the divine

injunction, "Open thy mouth for the dumb, plead the cause of the poor and needy," are ready for the wages of iniquity, to employ their talents in consigning to a life of unrequited toil, misery, and degradation, a poor, helpless fellow-man, who they know is innocent of crime, and as justly entitled to freedom as themselves. Jerusalem, it would seem, was infested with men of similar character. "Among my people," says the prophet, "are found wicked men; they lay wait as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men." But thank God, all do not catch men; some there are who strive to "deliver the spoil out of the hand of the oppressor," and they are honored with the derision of the Rev. N. Adams, D. D.

Another inroad on the morals of the community and the independence and moral power of the Church, is found in the recent clamor raised by the proslavery party against "political preaching." The outburst of indignation with which the fugitive law was received, was very annoying to the traders in southern votes and merchandize. Immediately a number of preachers set to work to turn, if possible, the current of religious feeling setting against the law. Soon the press groaned with sermons on the duty of obedience to the powers that be, and the damning sin of resisting the ordinance of God. Their sermons were received with great delight, by the very class that is now scandalized by the profanity of "political preaching." The New York union-saving, slave-catching committee, comprising "the property and standing" of the metropolis, had some of these very sermons printed at their own expense, and scattered broad-cast through the land, and Daniel Webster addressed a complimentary letter to the author of one of them. *Then*, proslavery "political preaching" was both patriotic and Christian. Mr. Webster, trampling under foot his most solemn and emphatic pledges, had betrayed the cause of freedom, had labored to throw immense territories open to slavery, had travelled about the country exhorting the people to conquer their prejudices and catch slaves, and had endeavored to arm the fugitive act with the terrors of constructive treason, by converting the slightest

resistance to its execution into the capital crime of *levying war against the United States!* No sooner had he expired, than ONE HUNDRED clergymen united in canonizing his memory by sounding forth his praises from as many pulpits. Sermons in praise of Daniel Webster and *his* politics, gave no offence to pious slave-catchers and conservative divines.

At last the tide turned. The profligate repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the villanies perpetrated in Kansas, the wicked devotion of the Democratic party to the extension of human bondage, and the nomination to the Presidential chair of one of the parties to the Ostend rascality, all combined to force on the consciences of some of Christ's ministers, the consideration of their duty at the present crisis. Multitudes were striving to effect measures adverse alike to the welfare of the country and the precepts of God's word. Piratical warfare was to be prosecuted for the benefit of the slave power; vast territories, now free, were to be subjected to the abominations of slavery, and the opposition of the inhabitants was to be crushed by brute force. What part, under such circumstances, were the sentinels on the walls of Zion to take? Were they to be, like the priests of old, denounced by the prophet as "dumb dogs," or were they to warn their people not to be partakers of other men's sins? Such a warning would, of course, excite the anger of Democratic politicians and South-side divines. But said God to the prophet, "Thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." Hence, the question of duty was not to be decided by the popular suffrage. "Son of man," was the command, "cause Jerusalem to know her abominations; shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins." Happily for the honor and usefulness of the Church, several faithful sermons were preached, urging the people not to encourage by their votes or otherwise, iniquitous measures, whereby they would expose themselves and their country to the Divine wrath. And now arose from the friends and supporters of slavery a howl of anger and indignation, against such a desecration of the sanctity of the pulpit!

With mere questions of political expediency, the pulpit has no legitimate connection, but questions of political morality are peculiarly within the province of men, who, by the most solemn rites and the most awful vows, are appointed preachers of righteousness. If the Legislature proposes to legalize polygamy, to abolish the Sabbath, to license lewdness, is the Church to be deaf and dumb? If the Church may not rebuke wickedness in high places, she becomes a mere tool in the hands of rulers and demagogues, silently sanctioning their atrocities, and reddening her skirts with the blood of souls lost through her cowardice and selfishness. Churches, as well as individuals, may be sure their sins will find them out. The American Church is deeply involved in the guilt of slavery, and has given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. While, at the South, the clergy and church members are almost universally slave-owners, and exhibit the same unholy tempers on the subject that distinguish the southern demagogues; their brethren at the North not unfrequently ape their violence and vulgarity, and thus, in both sections, the Church is losing its hold on the public conscience, and giving a new impulse to infidelity. The Rev. Mr. Tyng, of Philadelphia, an Episcopal clergyman, lately delivered a godly sermon against the extension of slavery, and urging the duty of prayer, humiliation, and penitence. A majority of his congregation took offence, and compelled his resignation. And what sympathy did this martyr to ministerial fidelity receive from a brother of his own Church, the Rev. Editor of the *New York Church Journal*, professedly a *religious* paper? With a coarseness and malignity becoming a border-ruffian chaplain, after noticing the dismissal, he added: "As to the particular result, being summarily driven out of his parish for 'preaching politics,' we have but three words to say—SERVED HIM RIGHT."

The priests of Anathoth were enraged against Jeremiah for preaching politics; but what was the Divine message to the prophet? "Thus saith the Lord, of the men of Anathoth that seek thy life, saying, prophesy not in the name of the Lord,

that thou die not by our hand, thus saith the Lord, behold, I will punish them." The same spirit is now active which in former days said to "the seers see not, and to the prophets prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." A minister may preach politics with impunity, provided he preaches smooth things and prophecies deceits. He may dwell at pleasure on our wealth and population, and power and glory, and prophesy our future greatness among the nations of the earth. But let him rebuke national vanity, and arrogance, and profligacy, and those who have the power will make him to know that "he is abhorred that speaketh uprightly," and the men of Anathoth will exclaim, "served him right."

Another wound which the proslavery spirit inflicts on Christianity is the forgetfulness it induces, that negroes are of the same nature with that assumed by the Son of God when he was made flesh, and that they are equally entitled with their white brethren to all the blessed hopes, and promises, and precepts of the Gospel.

Strange as it may seem, although we have millions of these people, free and bond, in our country, our divines and church members, for the most part, seem utterly unconscious, not merely of their wrongs and sufferings, but of their very existence. Thus we have reports from the Bible Society agents at the South, telling us all the families in such a county have been visited, and that so many were found destitute, and so many supplied; when, in fact, not one negro family was supplied, nor even visited. No falsehood was intended, and nobody supposed negroes were included in the sphere of the agent's labors. And so also in the free States, negroes are rarely the subjects of Christian solicitude. In the "*Carrier Dove*," for September last, an Episcopal Missionary periodical, we have an amusing instance of the extent to which this indifference to the negro is carried. In an article intended to excite missionary zeal in behalf of the Hindoos, by contrasting their subjection to caste with our happy exemption from it, the editor exclaims: "How different is the condition of things in this

country from what it is in India! Here, *all people* are allowed to follow the calling they prefer, or have a capacity for." Now, the man who wrote this had no wish to deceive. He knew, indeed, how zealously his own Church had maintained caste within her walls, and how cruelly multitudes were crushed, in the very city in which he was writing, by the distinction of caste; but then he did not recognize negroes as "people." He thought nothing about negroes. "*Here, all people are allowed to follow the calling they prefer, or have capacity for!*" And this most palpable untruth is put forth under the sanction of a great religious association! How comports this complacent assertion with the fact that no negro is permitted in New York to earn his bread by sweeping the streets, or taking a license to drive a cart; and that, however weary and feeble he may be, he is rudely driven from many of our public coveyances. When Crummell applied for admission into the Theological Seminary as a candidate for Holy Orders, the Bishop informed the Trustees, that, in literary acquirements and religious qualifications, he was fully entitled to admission. But no; the physicians of souls shut the gates of the Seminary against the low-caste applicant. Is it strange that the physicians of the body should follow an example of such high authority, and expel from their college a student who was suspected of having African blood in his veins? It is only recently, and in consequence of external pressure, that the Convention of the Diocese of New York consented to permit a low caste minister of Jesus Christ to take a seat among the Brahmins. In the Pennsylvania Convention such ministers are still excluded, notwithstanding the earnest and Christian remonstrance of the Bishop. Yet we are exhorted by the editor of the *Carrier Dove* to convert the Hindoos, and thus relieve them from the curse of caste! Physician, heal thyself.

Another and more public demonstration of this morbid insensibility to the wrongs and sufferings of the colored race among us, was given at the great meeting held in New York in behalf of religious freedom in *Tuscany* (!) A man and his

wife were said to have been imprisoned by the Duke of Tuscany for the offence of *reading the Bible*. The rumor was false. They were imprisoned, not for reading the Bible, but for impugning the doctrines of the Romish Church and attempting to make proselytes from the established religion. Great was the indignation expressed against the religious intolerance of Tuscany by divines and politicians, who look with silent indifference on the legal restraints of millions of their own countrymen on reading the Word of God. Some one at this meeting—of course a fanatic—proposed an expression of sympathy for those *at home* who, suffering far greater tyranny than that exercised by the Duke of Tuscany, are forbidden by law the knowledge of letters. A hubbub ensued, and the resolve was indignantly rejected. At this very time it was well known that a Christian lady in Virginia was under indictment for teaching a few colored children of *free* parents to read; and only a few days after this great New York meeting in behalf of religious freedom, Mrs. Douglass was tried, convicted, and sent to the common jail for one month for her crime, and, to the infamy of Virginia, served out her time. Yes, our dough-faces, and democrats, and proslavery clergy, eagerly seized the opportunity of pouring forth their indignation against tyranny in Tuscany, while laboring to uphold in their own country a most loathsome system of religious and civil despotism—a despotism which subjects a mother to lashes on her bare back for teaching her own child to read the Bible. In one of our States, to give a slave *any* book, not excepting the Bible, is a crime to be punished with thirty-nine lashes! Tyranny in Tuscany is horrible; to oppose a tenfold worse tyranny at home is fanaticism: to foster and extend it is patriotic and democratic.

Greatly is the cause of religion wounded and dishonored by the eulogiums passed by the professors of cotton divinity on the religious character of the slave-holders, and of such politicians as condescend to be their tools. Brother Stringfellow's estimate of the piety and orthodoxy of the South will not do much harm; but that estimate, endorsed by Brother

Adams, and given to the public under the virtual sanction of the American Tract Society, will be a cause of scoffing to the infidel and of grief to the serious Christian. The slave region is held up to our admiration as peculiarly religious and evangelical. This character is not disproved by individual cases of atrocity, for such cases occur in all communities, and the very family of our Lord comprised a thief and a traitor. But in a religious community there will be a religious public opinion; and the more extensively piety prevails, the greater will be the abhorrence of crime. Dr. Adams is particularly enamored with the slave-holding piety exhibited in Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia. It is in these States that orthodoxy maintains its sway, and here is found an amount of faith exceeding that held by the descendants of the Puritans, while infidelity flourishes more vigorously on the soil of New England than on that which is enriched with the tears and blood of slaves. Instead of investigating the crimes committed in these three pious and orthodox States, we shall bring their state of morality to the single but decisive test of *public opinion* on an act which, in every civilized community not corrupted by slavery and its political and commercial influence, is deemed most atrocious.

Mr. Sumner, a member of the U. S. Senate from Massachusetts, had on various occasions been grossly insulted by southern Senators for his frank, manly opposition to slavery. On the conclusion of one of his speeches, a slave-holding Senator in full Senate characterized it as "the barking of a puppy." Unintimidated by insult, in May last he delivered a powerful speech on the affairs in Kansas, and made free but just remarks on the character of American slavery and the means used to extend it. A Mr. Brooks, a member of the lower House from South Carolina, took offence at this speech, although it contained not the most distant personal allusion to himself. The assault which followed is well known. The *plan* of that assault, and the motives which led to its adoption, were thus acknowledged by the assailant himself, in a speech in the House of Representatives: "Expressly to prevent

taking life, I used an ordinary cane. I went to the Senate deliberately. I hesitated whether I should use a horse-whip or a cow-hide ; but knowing that the strength of the Senator was superior to mine, I thought he might wrest it from me. If he had, I might have done what I should have regretted for the remainder of my life." A voice: "He would have killed him." To this Brooks made no response, thus admitting the inference drawn from his words.

It thus appears, from the confession of the ruffian himself, that he was apprehensive that Sumner, being the strongest man, might wrest from his hands a whip or cowskin, and perhaps apply it to his own shoulders. Hence, the whip and cowskin were laid aside for a weapon which might at once disable the intended victim, and prevent him from returning a blow, or defending himself. The advent into the Senate chamber was *deliberate*. Sumner was in an arm-chair, writing on a table before him, and thus, by his position, deprived of the use of his limbs for defence. Brooks took his aim, and by a well-directed blow on the head, at once disabled the object of both his fear and his hatred, and repeated his blows on the head in quick succession, till the Senator fell senseless on the floor. Had the first blow not produced the intended effect, Sumner might have succeeded in wresting the cane from his assailant. For such a contingency his enemy was prepared, and a pistol or dagger was to ensure the assassination of the antislavery orator. So severe was the injury inflicted, so nearly was Sumner's life sacrificed, that after the lapse of nine or ten months, he was still unable to resume his seat in the Senate.

Let us now see how this man's conduct was regarded by a people whom the Tract censor tries to make us believe have, in consequence of the evangelizing influence of human bondage, made greater advances in Christian faith than the inhabitants of New England, who are destitute of this special means of grace. For the assault on Mr. Sumner, the paltry fine of \$300 was imposed by a Washington judge, without one word of disapprobation of the conduct of the culprit. Immediately

the newspapers announced that Brooks' constituents had raised for him *double the amount of the fine*.

A resolution was introduced into the House of Representatives to expel Brooks. It received a majority of the votes, but failed for want of the required two-thirds. Not one single member from Dr. Adams' three favorite States voted for the expulsion. Still, as a *majority* had thus pointedly condemned the outrage, the gentleman's *honor* was touched—he resigned his seat, and appealed to his constituents, placing his re-election on the single issue, whether he had done right or wrong in attacking and nearly murdering a defenceless man, and that man a Senator of the United States. He was immediately re-elected without opposition, and received 7,900 votes. Honors were forthwith showered on him, and on his return to South Carolina, after the adjournment of Congress, ovations were offered to him as to some high-minded, virtuous patriot or philanthropist. His journey through his State was a triumphal progress. On reaching Columbia, the mayor summoned a meeting of the citizens to greet his arrival. “At eight o'clock,” says the report, “the City Hall was so densely crowded that it was found necessary to move an adjournment to the street in front of the Court House, upon the balcony of which Mayor Arthur presented Mr. Brooks, in presence of the assembled mass of citizens, a handsome silver pitcher, a gold goblet, and one of Mr. Peckham's finest hickory *canes* with a handsome gold head. The mayor made him a flattering address, and assured him that the citizens of Columbia delighted to honor him.” Brooks replied that “every foot of the way from Washington to this city, he had met with kindness from the people of the South, and it gratified him to believe, that were he to travel to the extremest verge of the South, he should meet with the same hearty welcome as he had experienced here and elsewhere.” He then adverted to the possibility of Fremont's election, and declared that, if elected, “it was his deliberate opinion that on the 4th of March next, the South should rise in their might, march to Washington, and seize the archives and the Treasury of the Government.”

This exhortation to treason, civil war, and plunder, was well received, and a display of fireworks concluded the festivities in honor of a base ruffian.

On coming to Ninety Six, he found a grand banquet prepared for him, at which the Governor of the State, and Mr. Toombs, Senator from Georgia, were guests. Two goblets of gold and one of silver, and two *canes* were presented to the hero of the night. The chairman, referring to the assault, remarked to the audience: "We highly approve of that act which he performed on the 22d of May last, on the floor of the Senate Chamber of the United States. That, gentlemen, was a noble, though daring act." Brooks, in reply, observed: "For inflicting the punishment on Mr. Sumner, of Massachusetts, I have had showered upon me applause and commendation from every part of the South. My own people have even humbled me by the honors they have poured down upon me." After these extracts, it is unnecessary to quote from the ferocious applause bestowed on Brooks by the people of South Carolina. Let us next turn to Georgia. It is sufficient to say, that this State was represented by her Senator, Mr. Toombs. This gentleman made a speech at the banquet, in which he fully approved of the outrage on Mr. Sumner, and declared "he saw it done, and it was well done." Immediately after the assault, this man justified it in a speech in the Senate. We now come to Virginia, the third slave State especially commended by Dr. Adams for its evangelical faith.

Room can be afforded for extracts from only two Virginia papers, but they shall be the chief organs of the two great political parties. In a report of Mr. Sumner's health it had been stated, "If he essays to walk, his lower limbs refuse their office." On this the democratic organ, the *Richmond Inquirer*, published the following: "What a pity! what a pity! 'If he essays to walk, his lower limbs refuse their office.' Possibly they are ashamed to propel the contemptible carcass of the cowardly cur. The most satisfactory test to which his lower limbs can be subjected would be to set Preston S. Brooks after him with a good cane." Again, "we consider the act good in concep-

tion, better in execution, and best of all in consequence. These vulgar abolitionists in the Senate are getting above themselves. They have grown saucy, and dare to be impudent to gentlemen. Now they are a low, mean, scurvy set, with some little book-learning, but as utterly devoid of spirit or honor as a pack of curs. The truth is, they have been suffered to run too long without collars. They must be lashed into submission. Sumner, in particular, ought to have nine-and-thirty every morning. He is a great, strapping fellow, and could stand the cowhide beautifully. There is the blackguard WILSON, an ignorant Nantick cobbler, swaggering in excess of muscle, and absolutely dying for a beating. Will not some one take him in hand? HALE is another huge, red-faced, sweating scoundrel, whom some gentleman should kick and cuff until he abate something of his impudent talk. Let them once understand that for every word spoken against the South they will suffer so many stripes, and they will soon learn to behave themselves like decent dogs. We trust other gentlemen will follow the example of Mr. Brooks, so that a curb may be imposed upon the truculence and insolence of abolition speakers. If need be, let us have a caning or cowhiding every day. Sumner and Sumner's friends must be punished and silenced. Either such wretches must be hung or put in the penitentiary, or the South should prepare at once to quit the Union. We are the most moral, religious, contented, and law-abiding people on earth, and are daily becoming more so." Such are the utterings of Virginia democracy. Accustomed to the submissive demeanor of northern doughfaces, those *well-behaved and colored dogs*, it is exceedingly excited by any indication of independence of feeling and expression on the part of northern representatives. We now turn to the whig party, and, judging from its representative press, it has in vulgarity, indecency, and profligacy, fallen to the level of the rival party. Said the *Richmond Whig*: "A GOOD DEED.—It will be seen by the telegraph that Mr. Brooks, of South Carolina, after the adjournment of the Senate yesterday, administered to Senator Sumner, the notorious foul-mouthed abolitionist from Massachusetts, an

elegant and effectual caning. We are rejoiced at this. We trust the ball may be kept in motion. SEWARD and others should catch it next."

Surely if there be a woe unto them who call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, it must fall on the people who rejoice in and applaud the vile ferocity of Preston S. Brooks, and also on those who hold up such a people as a special pattern of evangelical piety, among whom faith abounds and infidelity is rare.

If further evidence be wanting of the utter debasement of public sentiment among slaveholders, it may be found in the inscription on a banner borne in a democratic procession in Washington, in honor of Buchanan's election:—"SUMNER AND KANSAS,—LET THEM BLEED!" a sentiment worthy of the Thugs of India.

The attempt constantly made by a certain class to cover up the moral delinquencies of the slaveholders and their northern tools, has a deleterious influence on public morals. Mr. Pierce most grossly violated the solemn pledge he gave the nation, to do nothing to revive the slavery agitation, in zealously promoting the repeal of the Missouri compact. On finding Governor Reeder indisposed to aid in trampling on the rights of the people of Kansas, he removed him under the false and hypocritical pretence of speculating in public lands. But the tender-conscience President had no scruples in retaining as Governor of Utah the shameless Brigham Young, with his twenty or forty wives. The Mormon Governor has not been ungrateful for Mr. Pierce's favor, and has issued a proclamation announcing "the democratic party is the instrument in God's hand by which is to be effected our recognition as a sovereign State, with the institutions of slavery and polygamy, as established by the patriarchs and prophets of old, under divine authority." Of course the Mormons are to be good democrats, and the democratic party is henceforth to take polygamy under its protecting care, as well as slavery. Yet pains have been taken to hold up Mr. Pierce as a religious man, and we are

told with an air of triumph that he attends the Presbyterian Church, and says grace at table! Mr. Buchanan not only promises to walk in the footsteps of Mr. Pierce, but has gone even far beyond his predecessor, joining the piratical conspiracy at Ostend for seizing Cuba, and thus giving new vigor to the slave power at home. Yet a pious organ of cotton divinity proclaims the joyful tidings that the new President has a pew in a Presbyterian church, and reads "Jay's Morning Exercises!" Who will dare to condemn slavery as sinful, when its champions and propagandists are such "evangelical Christians."

Christianity is moreover wounded, not merely by the defence of the sum of all villainies by our northern clergymen, but also by the violence, vulgarity, and malignity of not a few southern divines. In various instances these men, in utter disregard of the obligations of their holy profession, have counselled and countenanced violence against abolitionists, and in one instance, at least, a reverend gentleman has been known to be placed on a Lynch club, claiming the right to take life—that is, to commit murder. A proslavery evangelical parson held a conspicuous place in the Legislature forced by the border ruffians on the people of Kansas. The Rev. F. A. Ross, D. D., of the Presbyterian Church, Alabama, thus excuses the Brooks' outrage: "I hold that God forbids free speech as clearly as he forbids the free bludgeon. Free speech sets the fire of hell. Such was Sumner's free speech; and God is more offended at that free speech than with the free cane which replied to it." And how with the free speech of the Richmond editors, and other proslavery orators every where? What amount of the bludgeon must be bestowed on the Rev. gentleman, to equal in moral turpitude his own ribald and blasphemous free speech—viz: "*God tells the Planter* to say to the North, to England, to France, to all who buy cotton, 'Ye men of Boston, New York, London, Paris—ye hypocrites, ye brand me as a pirate, a kidnapper, a murderer, a demon fit only for hell, and yet ye buy my blood-stained cotton. Oh! ye hypocrites, ye Boston hypocrites,

why don't ye throw the cotton in the sea as your fathers did the tea? Ye hypocrites, *ye abuse the devil, and then fall down and worship him.* Ye hypocrites—ye New England hypocrites—ye Old England hypocrites—ye French hypocrites—ye Uncle Tom's Cabin hypocrites—ye Beecher hypocrites—ye Rhode Island Consociation hypocrites—Oh! your holy twaddle stinks in the nostrils of God, and HE COMMANDS me lash you with my scorn, and HIS scorn, so long as ye gabble about the sin of slavery, and then bow down to me, and buy and spin cotton. Ye have, like French infidels, made reason your goddess, and are exalting her above the Bible. In your unitarianism and neology, and all modes of infidelity, ye are rejecting and crucifying the Son of God.'” If this man really believes, as he says, that God forbids what he calls free speech, he affords a remarkable illustration of that desperate defiance of the Deity which the Bible describes as “running upon the thick bosses of his buckler.”

In this country we have not far from 30,000 Protestant ministers. Had these men fearlessly and faithfully proclaimed the command of their Master, to love mercy and do justice, irrespective of complexion, slavery would have withered and died. “If,” as God declared of the prophets of old, “they had stood in my counsel and caused my people to hear my word, then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doing.”

Elijah, complaining of the idolatry of Israel, was comforted with the assurance that there were no less than 7,000 who had not bowed to Baal. Would to God we had an equal number of prophets, openly and fearlessly rejecting and condemning the worship of the southern Moloch.* Well, indeed,

* All indiscriminate censure is unjust. While the great body of the clergy have been time-serving, obsequious, tolerating, both by precept and by practice, as well as by silence, most stupendous cruelty and wickedness; there have been some, of various denominations, who, with the spirit and holy devotion of martyrs, have bid defiance to the proud, the wealthy, and the fashionable, and have, as faithful ambassadors of Christ, shown the people their transgressions. There are not a few, it is hoped, of Christ's

may every individual who names the name of Christ, or who ministers at His altar, make the Psalmist's prayer his own: "Let not those who wait on the Lord God of Hosts be ashamed for my sake: let not them that seek THEE, be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel." Of all the apostles of infidelity at the present day, none are so efficient and successful, although unconscious of the effect of their labors, as the reverend champions and apologists of American slavery. Dr. Adams, by his deplorable book, rendered still more disreputable by his position in a great religious institution, has been a stumbling-block and a rock of offence to many. The Boston Tract Society, which had included him among its officers, last spring wisely removed him, and thus relieved itself from the odium and responsibility of endorsing his conduct. But the American Tract Society, powerful in money, in members, and in influence, set at defiance all remonstrance, and re-elected this champion of human bondage to guard its press! A perseverance in its infatuated policy will soon convert into history the recent advice of a returned missionary, Rev. A. M. Richardson:—

"We can better afford to have no more tracts 'on sound morality and vital godliness' published in seven years to come, than to have the consciences of proslavery men quieted by their refusal to rebuke this giant wrong. It is true they have done a great and good work, but that fact should not shield them from merited rebuke for present wrong. They occupy a false position—they misrepresent the Gospel. When light

ministers who have imbibed enough of the spirit of their Master, to make the glorious language of the Rev. Dr. Wayland their own: "Slavery is a sin against God, and an outrage on humanity. I believe that Christ died for the redemption of our whole race; for the ignorant and down-trodden African as well as for his haughty Anglo-Saxon oppressor. Taking Christ for my example, and striving to imbibe His spirit, can I do otherwise than take to my bosom every down-trodden child of humanity? Jesus Christ, my Master, is not ashamed to call them brethren, and can I have any partnership in an attempt to trample them under foot? The UNION itself becomes to me *an accursed thing*, if I must first steep it in the tears and blood of those for whom Christ died."

has been refused, and the petitions and remonstrances of friends of Christ have been disregarded, the time has come for Christians and Churches to ACT in the matter. It seems to me the duty is plain. Let the Churches *cut off their supplies*, by turning their contributions into other channels until they repent." But no repentance will be deemed sincere, so long as the Rev. N. Adams, D. D., as the sentinel of the slave power, keeps watch and ward over the Tract press.

From what has been said, you, gentlemen, will form some idea of the momentous responsibility now resting on you. Your report will do much, either to reconcile the northern Church to human bondage and all its inseparable abominations, and thus to expose her to the scoff of the infidel, and to repel from her bosom the lovers of justice and humanity; or else to break the spell which has stupefied the consciences and indurated the hearts of many professed disciples of Christ, and led them to put Him to open shame. May Almighty God so enlighten your understandings, and sanctify your hearts, that you may hereafter give your account of this stewardship with joy and not with grief.

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM JAY.

February, 1857.